



## **Education Reform & Poverty**

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2014, 12:10 p.m.

Hotel Palomar – Dreamcatcher Ballroom

**Thank you, Lisa ... and good afternoon!**

**I'm proud to be with you today ... standing before some of Arizona's most innovative leaders in business and education. This is no coincidence, of course.**

**Our education system and economy are linked. Simply put, Arizona will attract more of the very best jobs when we have more of the very best schools.**

**This issue is why I became involved in public service more than three decades ago ... and it is why I continue to advocate for accountability, choice and high expectations in every Arizona school.**

**Ultimately, we are all here today for the very same reason:  
We understand the value of a great school ... and we know  
the difference a great teacher can make in the lives of  
students.**

**A great school with excellent teaching for every child ...  
that's our vision.**

**But in order to make this vision a reality, we first must come  
to terms with some difficult truths:**

- **First, Arizona has one of the fastest-growing student populations in the country.**
- **Second, on average, our students are poorer and more likely to come from non-English-speaking homes.**
- **Finally, in far too many neighborhoods, especially on tribal lands and in the inner city, there is simply not a quality education option available to families.**

**These are challenges indeed. Many people see these challenges and feel defeated or excuse mediocrity, but our children demand better than that.**

**I know I don't feel defeated ...**

**If you look around, you will find many wonderful and exciting ways that dedicated teachers, educators, and groups are solving these issues.**

**Just look at New Schools for Phoenix. This non-profit initiative is launching 25 “A-rated” public charter schools in urban Phoenix neighborhoods where quality education options are lacking.**

**Seven pilot schools have already opened, including Empower College Prep in north-central Phoenix. At Empower Prep, more than 95 percent of the students qualify for subsidized lunch ... but the school has earned an “A” rating in its first two years, and scores in the top 5 percent of all public schools in Arizona.**

**It's not just charter schools showing what can be achieved.**

**In my hometown of Glendale, every school in the Glendale Union High School District earned an “A” rating this year ...**

**... and each of its high schools were ranked among the nation's best by U.S. News & World Report—all of this despite higher-poverty rates at four of its nine high schools.**

**No excuses ... That's the mantra of “A for Arizona,” a group led by Lisa Graham Keegan and business leaders at the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Tucson Hispanic Chamber.**

**Lisa's group has identified the schools that are excelling with students, especially low-income students. Next, they'll take the lessons learned and use them to grow more excellent schools in every corner of our state.**

**There is no single model for what makes an “A-rated” school.**

**But there are common traits –empowered, effective teachers ... strong and resourceful school leadership ... involved parents ... and a culture of high expectations for all students.**

**Today, we'll be hearing from one of the nation's leading architects of education reform.**

**Neerav Kingsland helped lead the effort to rebuild the public education system in New Orleans following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina nearly a decade ago.**

**In place of a system that was failing way too many students, New Orleans has instituted universal school choice.**

**About 9 in 10 students now attend public charters, and school leaders have broader authority to lengthen school days and change curriculum in order to better serve students.**

**The result?**

**New Orleans has seen the largest, fastest improvement in test scores ever produced in an urban public school system.**

**Graduation rates have increased by 20 percentage points, and drop-out rates were cut in half.**

**Now this doesn't mean everything that worked in New Orleans is the solution for Arizona. But we can learn from their experience ... apply what works and know what pitfalls to avoid.**

**Our goal is the same: A great school available to every student.**

**Arizona students and families deserve nothing less.**

**Thank you!**